
Bagram News Express



Fighting Terror, Building Peace

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Herculean efforts move cargo, troops

Story and photos by
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Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — Nearly five decades since it first became part of the Air Force inventory, the C-130 Hercules continues to play an integral role transporting troops and cargo. The C-130Hs assigned to the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing at Bagram Air Field prove be the ideal aircraft for overcoming high altitudes, short runways and austere airfields in Afghanistan.

“We’re versatile and our environment is very dynamic,” said Staff Sgt. Jim Meyer, a flight engineer deployed from the Illinois Air National Guard. “We can get in and out of places no one else can. With the assault landings, low-level flying and dirt airstrips, the flying here is made for a C-130.”

In addition to hauling cargo and passengers to forward operating locations throughout Afghanistan, the aircrews are often tasked to fly airdrops, delivering much needed supplies to remotely located posts, or to fly aeromedical evacuations, transporting injured coalition members from field hospitals to



A group of U.S. Army Soldiers line up to board a C-130H Hercules here, Nov. 30. The C-130 is used to transport troops through the mountainous terrain and is able to land on the dirt air strips found at many of the bases throughout Afghanistan.

the joint theater hospital at Bagram. Each of these missions requires a different aircraft configuration. The C-130 can be configured to hold a maximum of six pallets of cargo, 74 litters, 16 container delivery system bundles, 92 combat troops or 64 paratroopers. A typical configuration for this location however allows for 56 troops and two pallets.

In November, the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron here airlifted more than 1,800 passengers, 665 tons of cargo and air dropped more than 60 tons of cargo. These numbers can change drastically month to month

depending on what is going on in Afghanistan and what they are tasked to support.

“Compared to the C-17, we don’t haul that much,” said Sergeant Meyer, who is on his fifth deployment. “Where we move stuff in and out of is the impressive thing.”

The number of C-130 sorties compared to other airframes is also impressive. The squadron averages more than 30 combat sorties a day and ensures there is an aircraft in the air at all times, ready to support urgent taskings.

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Each mission can consist of three or four sorties and it's not uncommon for the aircrew's taskings to change mid-mission. A far-stretch from home-station flying, the aircrews have learned to adapt to the often hectic flying schedule.

"It can be chaos, but you get used to the chaos and control what you can control," said Lt. Col. T.A. Roberts.

Master Sgt. David Brown is a C-130 loadmaster deployed from the North Carolina Air National Guard. On his fourth deployment, he agreed the work here can be the hardest aircrews will experience.

"You just try to do your job the best you can," he said. "Some days it's easier than others. But for a part-timer, being deployed keeps your attitude where it needs to be."

For many in the C-130 community, there is no place better suited for flying than Afghanistan.

"It's everything the C-130 was designed to do - from airdrop to resupplying troops on dirt landing zones to flying through mountainous terrain," said Capt. Blake Greenfield, a pilot deployed from Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark. "For the C-130 community, this is what you want to do. It's both challenging and rewarding, but it's what we signed up for - to do these missions."



Chief Master Sgt. Byron Todd, a loadmaster with the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, grabs cargo from a U.S. Army Soldier to be tied down in the back of a C-130H Hercules here, Nov. 30. The C-130 is the primary aircraft used to move cargo and passengers around Afghanistan. Chief Todd is deployed from the Minnesota Air National Guard.



Tech. Sgt. Joel Sainsbury (right), a C-130 Hercules flight engineer, and 1st Lt. Jason Christensen, a C-130 pilot, review data during a flight over Afghanistan Dec. 1. The C-130 has been performing tactical airlift for nearly five decades, and is a key element to moving cargo and troops throughout Afghanistan. Sergeant Sainsbury and Lieutenant Christensen are assigned to the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron and deployed from the Minnesota Air National Guard.



Staff Sgt. Shawn Engelsted, a loadmaster with the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, directs a k-loader driver while loading cargo onto a C-130H Hercules here, Nov. 30. The cargo department of a C-130, originally designed to match the specifications of a railroad boxcar, can hold up to six cargo pallets. Sergeant Engelsted is deployed from the Minnesota Air National Guard.

President Bush visits Bagram



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Rachel Martinez

President George W. Bush paid a visit to the servicemembers at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan Dec. 15 during his last visit as President of the United States.

Bush expressed his well wishes to the troops during the holidays and thanked them for their service in eastern Afghanistan.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Samuel Morse



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Rachel Martinez



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Samuel Morse

451st Air Expeditionary Group changes command

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Rachel Martinez
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — With the symbolic passing of the unit flag, the 451st Air Expeditionary group changed command during a ceremony attended by Afghan and Coalition partners Dec. 13 in Southern Afghanistan.

Col. Luther Turner, who served as 451st AEG commander since Jan. 9, relinquished command to Col. Theodore Osowski.

The 451st AEG provides medical evacuation capability throughout Afghanistan with the HH-60 Pave Hawk. The group also launches and recovers unmanned aerial systems. The UASs are used as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms, as well as strike aircraft, and can perform line-of-sight missions in support of airbase defense, intelligence and operations preparation, detection and destruction of improvised explosive devices, and direct-action raids.

“(Colonel Turner) has definitely been the right man for the job,” said Brig. Gen. Mike Holmes, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing commander and presiding officer for the change of command ceremony. “He’s got unmatched expertise with unmanned aerial systems. He’s worked really hard to learn the helicopter mission. He’s also been a joint and combined innovator through the line-of-sight missions that have both defended the base and supported the local ground commanders.”



Col. Luther Turner, 451st Air Expeditionary Group commander, addresses the Airmen and Coalition partners in attendance at the 451st AEG change of command ceremony Dec. 13 at a base in Southern Afghanistan.

During his nearly one year as commander, Colonel Turner led more than 400 Airmen in the successful execution of 2,356 medical

evacuations and armed overwatch missions from an expeditionary airfield. The key focus of his command was building a partnership with Joint, Coalition, and other agency forces to

integrate UASs into the fight. He increased ramp space by 33 percent for ISR aircraft and led the design and construction of a new launch and recovery element at a forward operating base. The UAS teams he created executed 122 kinetic strikes, resulting in more than 300 confirmed enemy kills, a 73 percent reduction in IEDs in the region, and three counter narcotics interdictions netting more than 286 tons of illegal substances. For these accomplishments, Colonel Turner was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

“The privilege to command in a combat zone is what every warrior dreams of,” Colonel Turner said after receiving his Bronze Star. “The 451st’s role is to protect and enable. To use the words of some of my coalition partners, we provide airpower and air effects in several different forms to protect and enable the Afghans, the Royal Canadian Regiment, the 101st, just to name a few; and enable them in separating the insurgents from the population.

“It is easy to tie our Predators, Reapers, and HH-60 medevac missions to those ideals, but make no mistake, the enablers are our OSI team, our defenders, services, communications flight, religious support team, civil engineers, safety, stan/eval, our port dawgs, vehicle maintenance, ammo guys, all our LRF guys, the RMS guys - they are all doing amazing things each and every day.”

Colonel Turner is heading to the Pentagon where he will serve as director of operational training for Headquarters Air Force.



Col. Theodore Osowski accepts the 451st Air Expeditionary Group guidon from Brig. Gen. Mike Holmes, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing commander, during a change of command ceremony Dec. 13 at a base in Southern Afghanistan. Colonel Osowski assumed command of the 451st AEG from Col. Luther Turner.

News Briefs

COLD WEATHER GEAR

Per the USAFCENT Commander: effective 1 Oct 08, the only authorized uniform in the AOR is ABUs (w/exception of Civil Engineering AFSCs - 3E0X1, 3E0X2, 3E1X1 and 3E8X1). However, since the cold weather months are quickly approaching, it is imperative we outfit our Airmen with the proper cold weather gear. Because All Purpose Environmental Clothing System (APECS) demand continues to outpace existing inventory and projected production levels, the DCU Gortex jacket w/liner and the DCU field jacket are authorized for wear with the ABU in the AOR until 1 May 2009. Additionally, those Airmen who process through an Army Power Projection Platform and are issued ACU patterned cold weather gear may wear the uniform items inside the wire, as determined by their commander.

NATO MEDALS:

The NATO Medal typically takes approx. 90 days upon arrival for approval and distribution back to PERSCO. PERSCO has a spreadsheet posted to the SIPR public drive which you can view to see the status of your medal. If you notice any errors, please contact the following POCs: SSgt Amethia Dandy or MSgt Jesse Rouse at 431-2070/4409 or email 445EMSG.PERSCO@afghan.swa.army.mil

GOING TDY?

All Air Force members are required to in and out-process through PERSCO for TDYs, Emergency Leave or R&R Leave/Pass. The PAX terminal will not

manifest you until they have documentation stamped from PERSCO. All personnel assigned to the 455th are required to complete the AOR Travel Authorization Memo for any type of TDY. Please direct questions to PERSCO, 431-4409/2070.

COMBAT PUSH

Effective 22 Dec 08, Combat Push has extended their hours to accommodate the surge. New times are Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the Camp Cunningham Rec Tent from 0900L-1100L and from 2230L-0030L. Services and PERSCO will be available to sign outprocessing checklists. Personnel must complete their out-processing checklist entirely, complete their Post Deployment Health Questionnaire online and pick up their medical records at Flight Medicine/Public Health before coming to Combat Push. For more information contact PERSCO, 431-2070/4409.

COMBAT O

Combat Orientation is Thursday at 0900Z/1330L at the Enduring Freedom Chapel. This is a mandatory briefing for all Air Force personnel assigned to Bagram Air Field. Newcomers must attend the briefing within a week of arrival. Accountability is tracked and will be forwarded to the 1st Sergeants.

NEWCOMERS INPROCESSING

All Air Force members are required to inprocess with PERSCO. The inprocessing will start your combat pay entitlements. If you have been in the AOR for at least 30 days and you are not receiving combat pay, please stop by Finance located in the tower on

Camp Cunningham. If you know for a fact that you did not inprocess with PERSCO, then please visit PERSCO located in the Pax terminal. Call PERSCO 431-2070/4409 with any questions.

WAPS CATALOG

Enlisted personnel can access the WAPS catalog by visiting, <https://www.omsq.af.mil/te> The WAPS Catalog will let you know: the current study guidance for WAPS testing, what to do if you did not receive your CDC's, how to purchase CDC's at your own expense and answers to other WAPS questions.

REINTEGRATION WORKSHOP

The chapel is hosting a Reunion and Integration workshop Dec. 20 from 0900-1000 and Dec. 21 from 2100-2000 in the Camp Cunningham Town Hall. This workshop will introduce the skills needed to make a happy and successful reunion. For more info or to RSVP, e-mail Chap. (Capt.) Brian Nierman at brian.j.nierman@afghan.swa.army.mil.

A.C.E. MEETINGS

Airmen Committed To Excellence meets Fridays at 1700L/1230Z in front of Town Hall. Meetings are open to all Airmen E-1 to E-4.

ATTENTION ALL JUNIOR NCOS

The Bagram AF Route 5/6 meets Thursdays at 1800L/1330Z at Camp Cunningham's Town Hall. The meetings are open to all Airmen in the rank of E-5 and E-6.

AFSA MEETINGS

Air Force Sergeants Association Expeditory Chapter 1657 holds meetings bi-weekly on Saturdays. The next meeting is Dec. 20 at 1700.